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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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Masayuki Honma

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EXAMINER

WALLERSON, MARK E

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2626

DATE MAILED: 08/13/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/726,403

Applicant(s)

HONMA, MASAYUKI

Examiner

Mark E. Wallerson

Art Unit

2626

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☐ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 6.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1, 3, 5-9, 11-13, 15, 18, and 21-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kayano et al. (US Patent No. 5,812,747) in view of Kawada et al. (US Patent No. 5,610,725).

Regarding claims 1, 22, and 23, Kayano discloses an image forming system comprising: a plurality of image-forming apparatuses (copying machines 1-3) with printing units (laser writing unit 25 reads on printing units), each image-forming apparatus (copying machine) comprising a network communication unit (image sending and receiving unit 31), and a storage unit (image memory unit) adapted to store (stored) image data (image data; col. 3, lines 26-54) and operation mode data (copying conditions read on operation mode data) received (receives) through the network communication unit (status information sending and receiving means reads on network communication unit in the context of this reference); a data acquisition unit (image data sending and receiving means 1c, 2c, 3c) through which a first image-forming apparatus (of its own copying machine) acquires (receive in the context of this reference reads on acquires), through the network communication unit (connector 71, col. 3, lines 49-50),

the image data (image data) and the operation mode data (status information) stored (store) in another image-forming apparatus (other copying machine reads on another image-forming apparatus; col. 6, lines 36-65); and automatically (automatically, col. 5, lines 39-48) update (change mode).

Although Kayano does not disclose an operation mode update unit, Kawada discloses an operation mode update unit (operational panel) adapted to the operation mode (control program update) of the first image-forming apparatus (current operational panel reads on first image-forming apparatus) to an operation mode (control program) in accordance with the acquired operation mode data (different operational panel; col. 11, lines 8-12).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Kayano and Kawada due to both references disclosing interconnecting copier systems to provide a novel and useful communication system.

Regarding claim 3, Kayano discloses an image forming system comprising: a plurality of image-forming apparatuses (copying machines 1-3) with printing units (laser writing unit 25 reads on printing units), each image-forming apparatus (copying machine) comprising a network communication unit (image sending and receiving unit 31), and a storage unit (image memory unit) adapted to store (stored) image data (image data; col. 3, lines 26-54) and operation mode data (copying conditions read on operation mode data) received (receives) through the network communication unit (status information sending and receiving means reads on network communication unit

in the context of this reference); a data acquisition unit (image data sending and receiving means 1c, 2c, 3c) through which a first image-forming apparatus (of its own copying machine) acquires (receive in the context of this reference reads on acquires), through the network communication unit (connector 71, col. 3, lines 49-50), the image data (image data) and the operation mode data (status information) stored (store) in another image-forming apparatus (other copying machine reads on another image-forming apparatus; col. 6, lines 36-65); and an operation mode update unit (status information sending and receiving means) adapted to automatically (automatically, col. 5, lines 39-48) update (change mode) the operation mode (copying conditions) of the first image-forming apparatus (other copying machine) to an operation mode (copying conditions) in accordance with the acquired operation mode data (sends... copying conditions read on acquired operation mode data) in response (send in the context of this reference reads on response) to a command (command) from a control panel (operation unit 28 reads on control panel, col. 3, lines 39-54; col. 7, lines 50-col. 8, lines 1-21).

Regarding claims 5, 24, and 25, Kayano discloses an image-forming apparatus that communicates data, via a data communication medium, with a remote image-forming apparatus storing a series of image data to be printed, the image-forming apparatus comprising: a transmitter (image data sending and receiving means) adapted to transmit (send), to the remote image-forming apparatus (other copying machine) via the data communication medium (transmission line 80 reads on data communication medium; col. 6, lines 36-65), a first data request (copying machine 1 reads on first data

request) requesting (requests) that the remote image-forming apparatus (slave copying machine) transmit (send) image data (image data) stored (stored) therein (col. 7, lines 41 –col. 8, lines 1-10); and an acquisition unit (image data sending and receiving means) adapted to acquire (receive), via the data communication medium (80), data (image data) output (sent) by the remote image-forming apparatus (other copying machine) in response to the data request (receive image data from other copying machine; col. 6, lines 36-67), the data including operation mode data (copying conditions, col. 7, lines 50-67) preset (set to each slave in the context of this reference reads on preset) for the series of image data (page by page basis reads on series of image data) stored (stored) and to be printed (copying in the context of this reference reads on copying machine) in the remote image-forming apparatus (copying machine 2 reads on remote image-forming apparatus; col. 7, lines 50-67 and col. 8, lines 28-48).

Regarding claim 6, Kayano discloses an image-forming apparatus further comprising a display controller adapted to display, on a display unit (col. 3, lines 39-54), the operation mode data transmitted from the remote image-forming apparatus (col. 6, lines 36-67) and acquired through the acquisition unit (col. 7, lines 50-67 and col. 8, lines 28-48).

Regarding claim 7, Kayano discloses an image-forming apparatus wherein the acquisition unit acquires, via the data communication medium (col. 6, lines 36-67), the series of image data from the remote image-forming apparatus, according to the operation mode (col. 7, lines 50-67 and col. 8, lines 28-48).

Regarding claim 8, Kayano discloses an image-forming apparatus further comprising a printing unit adapted to print the series of image data (col. 8, lines 28-48), acquired from the remote image-forming apparatus by the acquisition unit (col. 8, lines 28-48), in accordance with the operation mode data acquired from the remote image-forming apparatus in association with the series of image data (col. 8, lines 11-48).

Regarding claim 9, Kayano discloses an image-forming apparatus wherein the printing unit prints out (col. 3, lines 26-38), through a storage unit adapted to store the image data (col. 8, lines 28-48), the series of image data from the remote image-forming apparatus (col. 8, lines 28-48).

Regarding claim 11, Kayano discloses an image-forming apparatus further comprising a code input unit adapted to input codes (col. 5, lines 51-67), and a printer controller adapted to determine whether to execute printing of the series of image data through the printing unit (col. 7, lines 27-49), based on a code input through the code input unit (col. 7, lines 27-49).

Regarding claim 12, Kayano discloses an image-forming apparatus further comprising: a determination unit adapted to determine whether a process in accordance with the operation mode data acquired from the remote image-forming apparatus through the acquisition unit is executable (col. 7, lines 50-col. 8, lines 1-10); and an update control unit adapted to automatically update the operation mode data acquired from the remote image-forming apparatus through the acquisition unit (col. 8, lines 11-21), in response to a determination result provided by the determination unit (col. 7,

lines 60-col. 8, lines 1-10), and to perform a print process in accordance with the updated operation mode (col. 8, lines 28-48).

Regarding claim 13, Kayano discloses an image-forming apparatus further comprising an update controller adapted to update the operation mode data acquired from the remote image-forming apparatus through the acquisition unit (col. 7, lines 50-col. 8, lines 1-10), in response to an instruction from a user (col. 7, lines 32-40), and to perform a print process in accordance with the updated operation mode (col. 8, lines 28-48).

Regarding claim 15, Kayano discloses an image-forming apparatus wherein the transmitter unit transmits, to the remote image-forming apparatus via the data communication medium (col. 6, lines 36-65), a data request requesting that the remote image-forming apparatus update the operation mode acquired from the remote image-forming apparatus by the acquisition unit (col. 7, lines 41-col. 8, lines 1-21).

Regarding claim 18, Kayano discloses an image-forming apparatus further comprising a searching unit adapted to search for a remote image-forming apparatus that communicates data (col. 7, lines 50-col. 8, lines 1-10); and an image-forming apparatus selection unit adapted to select a desired image-forming apparatus from among candidates in a search result provided by the searching unit (col. 7, lines 50-col. 8, lines 1-10), wherein the transmitter unit transmits the data request via the data communication medium to the image-forming apparatus selected by the image-forming apparatus selection unit (col. 7, lines 50-col. 8, lines 1-48), and the acquisition unit acquires, via the data communication medium (col. 6, lines 36-65), data from the remote

image-forming apparatus selected by the image-forming selection unit (col. 7, lines 50-col. 8, lines 1-10).

Regarding claim 21, Kayano discloses an image-forming apparatus wherein the operation mode data comprises a plurality of pieces of setting data about a number of copies, a size of copy sheets, and a discrimination between one-side printing and both-side printing (col. 7, lines 32-40).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 2, 4, 10, and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kayano et al. (US Patent No. 5,812,747) in view of Kawada et al. (US Patent No. 5,610,725) further in view of Maniwa (US Patent No. 5,933,584).

Regarding claims 2 and 4, Kayano discloses an image-forming system wherein the operation mode update unit updates the operation mode (col. 7, lines 50-col. 8, lines 1-21), and the acquired image data and the operation mode data (col. 7, lines 50-col. 8, lines 1-21).

Although Kayano and Kawada do not disclose the acquired image data and the operation mode data are erased, Maniwa discloses and the acquired image data and

the operation mode data (Kayano reference: col. 7, lines 50-col. 8, lines 1-21) are erased after the acquired image data is printed out (col. 17, lines 40-53).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Kayano, Kawada, and Maniwa due to the references disclosing networked image forming apparatuses to prevent the difficulty of expanding a system by adding I/O devices each based on different specifications.

Regarding claim 10, Kayano discloses an image-forming apparatus further comprising in response to an end of the printing of the series of image data by the printing unit (col. 9, lines 25-49).

Although Kayano and Kawada do not disclose an erase controller, Maniwa discloses an erase controller (col. 17, lines 35-53) adapted to perform an erase process on a series of already printed image data stored in the storing unit (col. 19, lines 61-col. 20, lines 1-9).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Kayano, Kawada, and Maniwa due to the references disclosing networked image forming apparatuses to prevent the difficulty of expanding a system by adding I/O devices each based on different specifications.

Regarding claim 14, Kayano discloses an image-forming apparatus wherein the transmitter unit transmits, to the remote image-forming apparatus via the data communication medium (col. 6, lines 36-65), thereof corresponding to the operation

mode data acquired from the remote image-forming apparatus through the acquisition unit (col. 7, lines 41-col. 8, lines 1-10).

Although Kayano and Kawada do not disclose a data request requesting that the remote image-forming apparatus erase the series of image data, Maniwa discloses a data request requesting that the remote image-forming apparatus erase the series of image data (col. 19, lines 61-col. 20, lines 1-9).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Kayano, Kawada, and Maniwa due to the references disclosing networked image forming apparatuses to prevent the difficulty of expanding a system by adding I/O devices each based on different specifications.

5. Claims 16, 17, and 19-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kayano et al. (US Patent No. 5,812,747) in view of Kawada et al. (US Patent No. 5,610,725) further in view of Fukuta (US Patent No. 6,226,095).

Regarding claim 16, Kayano discloses the remote image-forming apparatus comprises a storage unit (col. 6, lines 41-46).

Although Kayano and Kawada do not disclose a plurality of storage areas that store different pieces of image data, Fukuta discloses that includes a plurality of storage areas and stores, in the areas, image data to be printed, with different pieces of the image data stored from area to area (col. 20, lines 46-58).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Kayano, Kawada, and Fukuta due to the references disclosing networked image forming apparatuses to minimize the influence on print jobs for the remaining printing devices and also to suppress an increase in resources necessary for this operation.

Regarding claim 17, Kayano discloses an image-forming apparatus further comprising wherein the acquisition unit acquires, from the remote image-forming apparatus via the data communication medium (col. 6, lines 36-65).

Although Kayano and Kawada do not disclose a storage selection unit or the acquisition unit acquires a series of image data from within a selected storage area, Fukuta discloses a storage area selection unit adapted to select a desired storage area from among the plurality of the storage areas in the storage unit in the remote-forming apparatus (col. 20, lines 46-58), a series of image data within a storage area selected by the storage area selection unit, from among the plurality of the storage areas (col. 20, lines 46-58).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Kayano, Kawada, and Fukuta due to the references disclosing networked image forming apparatuses to minimize the influence on print jobs for the remaining printing devices and also to suppress an increase in resources necessary for this operation.

Regarding claim 19, Kayano and Kawada do not disclose wherein the remote image-forming apparatus stores a series of image data from a host computer.

Although Kayano and Kawada does not disclose the remote image-forming apparatus storing image data from a host computer, Fukuta discloses an image-forming apparatus wherein the remote image-forming apparatus stores a series of image data from a host computer (col. 8, lines 28-41).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Kayano, Kawada, and Fukuta due to the references disclosing networked image forming apparatuses to minimize the influence on print jobs for the remaining printing devices and also to suppress an increase in resources necessary for this operation.

Regarding claim 20, Kayano and Kawada do not disclose wherein the remote image-forming apparatus stores a series of image data from the host computer, in association with operation mode data set in the host computer.

However, Fukuta discloses an image-forming apparatus wherein the remote image-forming apparatus stores a series of image data from the host computer (col. 8, lines 28-41), in association with operation mode data set in the host computer (col. 7, lines 56-63).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Kayano, Kawada, and Fukuta due to the references disclosing networked image forming apparatuses to minimize the influence on print jobs for the remaining printing devices and also to suppress an increase in resources necessary for this operation.

Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Yasuda (US Patent No. 6,160,638) discloses a data communication apparatus and method.

Igarashi et al. (US Patent Publication No. 2003/0061322) discloses a network data base control device.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ashanti Ghee whose telephone number is (703) 306-3443. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thurs and alt. Fri. (7-4PM).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kimberly A. Williams can be reached on (703) 305-4863. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

MARK WALLERSON
PRIMARY EXAMINER